



Department of Veterans Services

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Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame announces the Class of 2015 *All Ohioans encouraged to attend the ceremony Nov. 5 in Columbus*

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame will induct the Class of 2015 in a ceremony at 11 a.m. November 5 at the Lincoln Theater in Columbus. The Ohio veterans' community and the public are cordially invited to attend and honor the 20 Ohioans in this year's class as they join the 478 others who are enshrined in the Hall.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame was established in 1992 to recognize the post-military achievements of veterans in community service after their military service ended. Charter members of the Hall's Class of 1993 included the six Ohio military veterans who were elected President of the United States and all Medal of Honor recipients from Ohio. Honorees of the past 22 years include astronauts, government officials, police officers, community leaders, and veterans' advocates.

The Lincoln Theater is located at 769 E Long St, Columbus, OH 43203. A brief biography of each of the inductees of the Class of 2015 is included in this release.

William H. Adams, (1929 – 2012) from Columbus, Franklin County was a veteran in the U.S. Army. Bill had a distinguished record of public service at the local and national levels. He held several leadership positions with Kiwanis International, Ohio Division including Lt. Governor Elect, past president of the Kiwanis Franklinton Club and 10-W Gladden Community House. He was active in the Columbus Public Schools, volunteering as a member of the Parent Advisory Committee and East Columbus Elementary School for more than 16 years. Bill served as commissioner for the Columbus Recreation and Parks Commission and on June 8, 2013, the City of Columbus renamed the William H. Adams Community Center at Krumm Park in his honor. He was actively involved with Boy Scouts of America, East Columbus Elementary School, Cub Scouts Pack Number 541, Community Police Advisory Board, City of Columbus Police Department and Korean War Veterans Association of Central Ohio, Chapter 116.

Jennifer L. Baun, 49, of Youngstown, Mahoning County served in the U.S. Navy. Today she serves veterans and the greater community. She is the president of the Northeast Ohio Women Veterans Unit 21, a chapter of the Military Women Across the Nation veterans group, an organization dedicated to women who proudly served in the military. Jenn is vice chair of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and was instrumental in seeking sponsorship for the biennial Ohio Women Veterans Conferences. Jenn worked diligently on the movement of legislation supporting the Ohio Women Veterans license plate. In May of 2015, Jenn was a finalist for the Athena Leadership Award

for the exceptional impact and leadership she has made in her career and community. While Jenn works full-time in the pharmaceutical industry; she spends a great deal of her free time helping veterans.

Ernest H. Bowman, 88, of Castalia, Erie County is a veteran of the U.S. Army who served in World War II. Ernie joined American Legion Post 83 in 1979. He served as the American Legion 5th District Americanism Chairman and National High School Oratorical and State Chairperson. He served as post chaplain for 20 years; made daily trips to the local hospital to visit the sick and has driven veterans to their VA medical appointments. Ernie served as the commander of the American Legion Post 83 Honor Guard and performed several hundred funeral services for veterans and their families. In 2012, the Firelands Chapter of the American Red Cross awarded Ernie with the Military Hero Award for his 30 years of helping men and women of the Armed Forces and their families receive respect and comfort in their final call. Ernie was a member of the Sandusky Kiwanis for more than 20 years, serving on the Community Service Committee.

Todd A. Briggs, 55, of Westerville, Franklin County served in the U. S. Air Force and was deployed during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Alan has made it his life's mission to serve his community and veterans. He volunteered as a member of the color guard for Honor Flight return celebrations and served as a Guardian. He photographs the event and provides a digital slide show for the veterans as a lasting personal souvenir of their day. Alan is a Life Member of VFW Post 7883 in Westerville and served as a past-commander, senior-vice commander, service officer, and is currently serving as trustee. After 9/11, he worked with local middle school teachers in Westerville to collect items for care packages being sent to deployed troops. Alan is a member of American Legion Post 171 in Westerville and has been their service officer for the past two years. He served in the rifle squad to provide funeral honors at veteran burials. Alan also volunteers at the Port Columbus USO Canteen.

Michael L. DeHart, 73, of Troy, Miami County served in the U.S. Army and is a highly decorated veteran. Among other decorations, he earned two Silver Stars for his service in the Vietnam War. In 2007, Mick worked tirelessly to find former members of Echo Company 2/5 Cavalry, the unit he had served with in Vietnam. He was able to find 226 men that year and organized the first company reunion in Memphis, Tennessee. It was the first time these men had seen each other in 38 years. He realized after the first reunion that nearly all the men suffered from some degree of PTSD or other Vietnam combat related issues. With this in mind, he began bringing in National Service Officers to counsel the men. They answered questions, filed claims and gave hope to the men who previously had none. The majority of his platoon had received a Purple Heart and Mick decided to invite the president of the Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) and two MOPH national service officers to one of the reunions. Mick was excited to see that many of the VA claims that were submitted during the reunions were successful and that many of the wives received counseling to better understand the mental and physical issues their husbands were facing.

Dennis DeMolet, 69, of Kettering, Montgomery County served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Dennis began helping other Vietnam veterans in the region find employment through his Veteran Outreach radio program and then helped them receive their VA benefits. While attending Sinclair College, Dennis founded and became the first president of the Veterans Club. The organization expanded quickly, forming branches at both Wright State University and the University of Dayton. As a result of these efforts, he was appointed as the chairman of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program for the State of Ohio and was selected as Disabled Veteran of Ohio. Dennis continued to influence his community through his membership on the City of Vandalia Planning Commission and committees within the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. He advocated for the creation of the Advisory Committee for Veterans Business Affairs, a committee within the U.S. Small Business Administration. Dennis served as chairman of the committee in Washington D.C. for several years, a testament to his vast knowledge of the concerns of

veteran and disabled veteran business owners. He also served as a Trustee on the Board of the Ohio Veterans Homes.

Thomas V. Francis, (1922-2013) from Russia, Ohio in Shelby County was a U.S. Navy Veteran of World War II. Tom was the founder and president of Francis Manufacturing Company, established in 1946. He was also co-owner and president of Superior Aluminum Products in Russia, Ohio. He was a lifelong member of the Catholic War Veterans Post 661 and Sidney American Legion Post 217. He was a life member and past Grand Knight of St. Remy Council of the Knights of Columbus, past president of the Russia Civic Association and member of the Russia Volunteer Fire Department for 30 years. Thomas served on the Wilson Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees and the Wilson Memorial Hospital Foundation Board. He was on the Board of Directors of Bank One and the Board of Directors of Minster Community Lanes. In 1995, after the death of his beloved wife, he established the Thomas V. and Corrine R. Francis Family Foundation, which makes annual charitable contributions to many worthwhile causes, including the "Shelby County Vets to D.C." program. In 2004, he received the prestigious Sidney-Shelby County Chamber of Commerce "Zenith Award" for his accomplishments and contributions to the community.

George E. Freeman Jr., 85, of Marysville, Union County served in the U. S. Army in the Korean and Vietnam War. George is a lifetime member of the VFW, DAV, American Legion, and the Union County Historical Society. He is also a member of the Moose Family where he has volunteered for many community service projects. George has established, operated, and provided senior centers with activities and informational seminars in his community. He is motivated by his desire to serve others through volunteering in local senior centers, and providing transportation for medical appointments and Meals on Wheels. As an AARP Alliance Leader, George is leading a countywide effort to recruit volunteers in order to support the AARP In-Motion Community Transportation Program, which helps transport dialysis patients to other counties for treatments and appointments. He was instrumental in getting a Dialysis Center established in Marysville in 2013.

Waverly Glover, 93, of Springfield, Clark County served in the U.S. Army in World War II. Waverly graduated with an accounting degree from Central State University. He continued his post-graduate work at the University of Dayton, and in 1961 became one of the first African-Americans in the region to become a certified public accountant. During his 36-year professional career, he received numerous awards, including being inducted into the Wilberforce University Hall of Fame for his leadership, dedication and service to the university, higher education and society. Waverly has served on a number of local boards of directors, including Central State University, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Catholic Charities, Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport, Urban League, YMCA and YWCA. Through the Dayton Foundation and the Springfield Foundation, he has established two scholarship funds to assist African-Americans in attending Wilberforce and Central State universities. Waverly was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of State to a six-year term on the U.S. National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Philip R. Gregg, 77, of Newark, Licking County served in the U.S. Army and the Ohio Army National Guard. Phil has been an active member of the American Legion Posts 92 and 804 for more than 26 years where he held many positions. He served as the Licking County Council Commander and is currently the president of the Licking County Veterans Alliance which performs military funerals throughout the county. Since being elected president, he has performed over 2,360 military service honors for the fallen. Phil served on the Utica Village Council and helped form the Utica Jaycees. He coached little league baseball, biddy football, and participated with a team in the Babe Ruth program. Phil has been active on the Utica Athletic Booster Club helping to erect a new field at Utica High School. He was recognized by Sertoma for his longstanding community involvement and also received an award from Home Instead Senior Care.

Philip actively worked with the Juvenile Justice System to rehabilitate local youth with disciplinary problems. Despite his serious medical conditions, he still insists upon participating in the military funerals.

Johnnie D. Hatfield, 74, of Canal Fulton, Stark County served in the U.S. Army and the Ohio Army National Guard. While serving as a councilman and later council president, he took action to fix the water and sewer problems facing his community; saved the city over \$500,000, making it possible for the plant to be financed at a lower interest rate; and doubled the city water capacity without a cost increase, boosting economic development. As the chairman of the Sewer Improvement Program he was able to save the city thousands of dollars by replacing the older, small sewer lines with larger lines that used gravity to replace expensive pump lines. He worked with the law director to purchase land to build a new police facility. One of his other successes as councilman was to save the first replica canal boat built in the State of Ohio, the St. Helena II Canal Boat. He organized and chaired a restoration committee that restored the St. Helena II and it is now a city attraction visited by thousands of people each year.

Albert H. Horn, Jr., 93, of Bryan, Williams County served in the U.S. Navy in World War II. Albert was a member of the St. John's United Church of Christ, serving as president of their council in 1957. Albert is a member and Paul Harris Fellow of the Bryan Rotary Club, serving as its president from 1983-84. He has served on the Board of the Community Hospitals of Williams County since 1972, is a member of Zenobia Temple of Toledo and Scottish Rite Bodies in the Valley of Toledo. He served on the search committee to acquire and organize a YWCA in the City of Bryan. Additionally, Al was instrumental in rallying and directing civic-minded neighbors to establish the Bryan Area Foundation in 1969 and has served as a trustee and treasurer of the group for 19 years. He is still a member of the board, which now has more than \$20 million in assets, oversees 300 separate funds and has distributed more than \$7.6 million in grants and scholarships.

David L. Kolbe, 65, of Howard, Knox County served in the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War. Dave trained to be a fire fighter and joined the Damascus Township Volunteer Fire Department. At age 33, Dave was elected as Damascus Township Trustee. He resigned his position as a volunteer fire fighter but he continued to support the Fire Department in other ways. In 1988, he was elected as Henry County Commissioner. Dave worked with a non-profit to build the Henry County Veterans Memorial. He partnered with Bowling Green State University to develop an internship program to offer students the opportunity to gain experience in public service. In 1989, Dave served as commissioner to the American Legion Buckeye Boy State and taught classes on county government to boys attending. Dave has said on more than one occasion, "If you want to help a vet, help them get a job." He works closely with Helmets to Hardhats, a non-profit organization that helps military servicemembers transition back into civilian life by connecting them with career opportunities in the construction industry. Dave works nationally as the political and legislative director for the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers. He is a 40 year member of Iron Workers Local 55 in Toledo.

Philip S. Meeks, 95, of Lima, Allen County served in the U.S. Navy in World War II. Phil is a true advocate for active military and veterans – he was an integral part of establishing a Naval Reserve Center in Lima in 1948 and is a lifetime member and past commander of American Legion Post 133 and VFW Post 1275. He is the founding member of AMVETS Post 1 and a member of the Allen County Veterans Council. Phil has been part of the Honor Guard for hundreds of funerals. Phil has been a volunteer special deputy in Allen County for 74 years, making him the longest continuous serving volunteer deputy in Ohio. Phil has been a Boy Scout leader for many years. He is active in the Masons and Shriners, helping to raise money on behalf of Shriners Hospitals and also participates in the Relay for Life and Heart Association activities. Phil has given thousands of hours of his time to help others, especially veterans.

Janice C. Messenheimer-Courtney, 58, of Navarre, Stark County, was born and raised in Alliance before serving in the U.S. Army during the Cold War. Following her military career, Janice became a teacher through the Troops to Teachers program and has taught thousands of students at Fairless High School over the past 19 years. Each day, she influences her students by encouraging them to get MAD, an acronym used to remind them to Make A Difference in everything they do. Janice also serves as the advisor for yearbook, newspaper, National Honor Society and the senior class, as well as senior citizens coordinator—a volunteer position where she helps students and staff to organize a monthly program and luncheon for Fairless-area senior citizens. Past positions Janice has held include assistant athletic director, OEA chapter president and representative, Falcon Playhouse costume and publicity chair, student council advisor and Key Club advisor. As Key Club advisor, she wrote a grant for and implemented a community-wide electronic recycling program. This program allows community members to drop off unwanted electronics to be recycled, the money raised offsets the costs of other projects or is donated to local families in need. As yearbook advisor, she also heads a major fundraiser each autumn, a Cinderella Ball dance for elementary school girls and their fathers, which draws 500 people annually.

William J. Richards, 66, of Columbus, Franklin County served in the U.S. Navy in the Vietnam War. Bill was a phenomenal teacher who taught history for nearly 30 years before he retired in 2011. He received many awards and recognition for his teaching ability. He worked to instill an understanding of the meaning and responsibilities of good citizenship in his students. Bill is a life member of the VFW in Hilliard, Post 4931, and a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America. He has dedicated his life to recognizing our veterans of World War II and the Korean War. Bill, with the assistance of his wife, Bobbi, has honored nearly 4,000 veterans from the greater Columbus area with an Honor Flight to visit Washington D.C. war memorials. From a modest beginning in 2007 in Springfield, Ohio, Bill has created and grown an extraordinary operation of hundreds of volunteers who have raised more than \$3 million to support the Honor Flight Columbus mission.

Nathan D. Shaffer, 67, of Spencerville, Allen County served in the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War, and later the Ohio Army National Guard and the Army Reserves. After his service to his country, Nate has continued to provide service to his community. He helped build a new press box, wired the new scoreboard, and installed a new sound system for Memorial Field at the local middle and high schools. Nate helped for several years at the Underprivileged Christmas Party taking care of the children who attended. He delivered gift bags and lap throws to veterans at the Dayton VA Hospital and Nursing Homes in Dayton. Nate was instrumental in building the Spencerville Area Veterans Memorial Park. He is a life member of the VFW Post 6772 where he is a member of the Post Color Guard, serving at funerals and parades. He is also a member of the VFW Clown Unit. In October of 2011, he drove his truck to Utah to recover the helicopter that he was a crewmember on in Vietnam for it to be restored and delivered to Motts Military Museum.

Charles D. Van Voorhis, 67, of Marion County served in the U. S. Marine Corps in the Vietnam War. Charles is on the Board of Directors for American Legion Post 584, a past commander, and has held several other positions. He has been educating the students of Marion County high schools on the Vietnam War for 30 years through the Vietnam War Experience Traveling Museum of which he is the curator. Through his own time and money his displays of memorabilia have grown over the years to 18 static displays. More than 35,000 students have attended the Vietnam Awareness School he coordinates each spring. In 2011, Charles began volunteering his time as a mentor for the Marion County Veterans Court. As a mentor, he attends the Veterans Courts to consult with judges on ways to assist the veterans participating in the program. He also provides transportation and is a confidant for the veterans, helping them overcome the challenges they are facing. Charles has helped approximately 25 veterans avoid the Marion County criminal system. Charles was also a leader in the Boy Scout program for 10 years. He is a member of the VFW and a life member of the DAV and 1st Marine Division.

Peter R. Wilkinson, 75, of Dublin, Delaware County served in the U.S. Air Force in the Vietnam War. Peter believes that because so many people helped him, his job is to help others. He volunteers coaching children in soccer, youth roller hockey, and the Special Olympics. He was a mentor for Northwest Counseling in Columbus, and supported abused and neglected children in the Delaware County Court system as a court appointed special advocate. In addition, he was president of the Board of Directors of Friends of Delaware County. Peter is a development committee member of the Stratford Ecological Center, where he also consults on strategic planning. He is the Vice President of Communications, newsletter editor, and past president of the Military Officers Association of America Central Ohio Chapter. Peter is a member of the Central Ohio Homeless Veterans Stand Down committee, a mentor in the Franklin County Veterans Court, and an Honor Flight Guardian for the Columbus Honor Flight Program.

Lynn E. Wolaver, 91, of Fairborn, Greene County served in U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II. Lynn devoted himself to public service, holding positions as a member of the Fairborn City Planning Board, City Council, deputy mayor, and mayor of Fairborn. He has been an active member of the Fairborn Chamber of Commerce, Fairborn Rotary Club, and the American Legion. He served on numerous local boards and committees, applying his knowledge and expertise for the betterment of the region. Dr. Wolaver spent nearly 40 years as an employee at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Fairborn, Ohio, holding various positions, including Dean for Research Emeritus at the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. During his time at Wright-Patterson, Dr. Wolaver conducted research in the areas of navigation, astrodynamics, bioengineering and systems analysis, and he has authored over 60 technical papers on these topics. His academic achievements have earned him induction into prestigious honorary societies, and various honors and awards, including the Fairborn Chamber of Commerce's Ed Duncan Distinguished Citizen Award, Fairborn Chamber of Commerce President's Award, University of Illinois Distinguished Alumnus Award and Green County E. J. Nutter Award.

Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Committee:

The Hall of Fame Executive Committee, comprised entirely of veterans, serves as advisors for the Hall of Fame and selects up to 20 inductees annually from nominations provided by the citizens of Ohio. Men and women chosen for induction into the Hall come from all eras, all branches of service and all walks of life.

The bronze plaque honoring the Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2015 will be on display in the Ohio Statehouse 3rd Street lobby just inside from the Veterans Plaza November 6, 2015 through May 2016. An Enshrinement Ceremony will be held in early May when the Class of 2015 will be added to the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame permanent display on the second floor of the Riffe Center for Government and the Arts at 77 South High Street in downtown Columbus.

Additional information on past inductees is available at: http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_hall_of_fame.aspx It's not too early to nominate deserving veterans for the Class of 2016. Information and a nomination form can be found at: http://dvs.ohio.gov/VETERANS_HALL_OF_FAME

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The Ohio Department of Veterans Services (ODVS) supports the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. ODVS works to actively identify, connect with, and advocate for veterans and their families. Ohio law gives the department the responsibility to partner with county veteran service commissions and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in order to "serve those who have served."